



FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



Request Number: F-2012-01481

Keyword: Road Policing

Subject: Fixed Penalties A2 Bangor to Belfast

Request and Answer:

I am writing to confirm that the Police Service of Northern Ireland has now completed its search for the information.

I have today decided to:

- disclose information in response to questions 1 and 2 pursuant to the provisions of Section 31 of the Freedom of Information 2000 Act.

Question 1

Could you provide me with details of the number of speeding tickets issued between 1 April 2011 and 31 March 2012 on the following stretch of road:

A2 Bangor to Belfast. In the "average speed" section tracked by cameras. From the first one roughly at Rathgael Road in Bangor to the last camera at the Shore Road/A2 intersection in Holywood.

Question 2

And the same request in the other direction, for the A2 Belfast to Bangor.

Answer

From 1 April 2011 to 31 March 2012, 81 tickets were issued from the SPECs system on the A2.

These figures represent Conditional Offers of Fixed Penalty Notice that have been issued as of 24 April 2012. These figures are strictly provisional as some tickets issued may be subsequently cancelled and some detections from these cameras are still in process and a Conditional Offer of Fixed Penalty Notice has yet to be issued.

To provide a further breakdown of the total number of tickets issued could compromise PSNI's law enforcement ability on public roads and is therefore exempt from disclosure.

Section 17(1) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 requires the Police Service of Northern Ireland, when refusing to provide such information (because the information is exempt) to provide you the applicant with a notice which:

- (a) states that fact,
- (b) specifies the exemption in question and
- (c) states (if not otherwise apparent) why the exemption applies.

The exemption, as well as the factors the Department considered when deciding where the public interest lies, are listed below:

Section 31 (1)(a)(b) Law Enforcement

Section 31 is a prejudice based and qualified exemption, therefore a Harm Test and Public Interest Test are necessary.

Harm Test

The PSNI is charged with enforcing the law, preventing and detecting crime and protecting the communities we serve. Releasing a further breakdown of the figures could negatively impact on the police's ability to effectively enforce speed limits and expose drivers and pedestrians to significant risk of harm.

Public Interest Test - Section 31

Factors favouring release

The PSNI has a duty to effectively police Northern Ireland's roads and there is public interest in how the organisation efficiently enforces speed limits. Disclosure would empower the public to have a more accurate and informed debate in relation to the measures employed by the police in maintaining road safety.

Factors favouring retention

Release of this information could compromise the effectiveness, integrity and objectives of the road safety scheme and likely prejudice the prevention or detection of crime and the apprehension or prosecution of offenders.

Decision

There is always a strong public interest in the accountability of the Service, however balanced against this is the importance of the ability of the police to prevent and detect crime. Disclosing a further breakdown of the information has the potential to reduce the effectiveness of the road safety equipment in place and limit the law enforcement role of the police. In conclusion, the PSNI's effective enforcement of speed limits and law enforcement ability must take precedence over the public's interest in disclosure.

If you have any queries regarding your request or the decision please do not hesitate to contact me on 028 9070 0164. When contacting the Freedom of Information Team, please quote the reference number listed at the beginning of this letter.

If you are dissatisfied in any way with the handling of your request, you have the right to request a review. You should do this as soon as possible, or in any case within two months of the date of issue of this letter. In the event that you require a review to be undertaken, you can do so by writing to the Head of Freedom of Information, PSNI Headquarters, 65 Knock Road, Belfast, BT5 6LE or by emailing foi@psni.pnn.police.uk.

If following an internal review, carried out by an independent decision maker, you were to remain dissatisfied in any way with the handling of the request you may make a complaint, under Section 50 of the Freedom of Information Act, to the Information Commissioner's Office and ask that they investigate whether the PSNI has complied with the terms of the Freedom of Information Act. You can write to the Information Commissioner at Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House,

Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF. In most circumstances the Information Commissioner will not investigate a complaint unless an internal review procedure has been carried out, however the Commissioner has the option to investigate the matter at his discretion.

Please be advised that PSNI replies under Freedom of Information may be released into the public domain via our website @ www.psnipolice.uk

Personal details in respect of your request have, where applicable, been removed to protect confidentiality.